

By: Ellis

S.B. No. 1615

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a pilot program for language interpreter services under the medical assistance program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 32, Human Resources Code, is amended by adding Section 32.061 to read as follows:

Sec. 32.061. LANGUAGE INTERPRETER SERVICES PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) The Health and Human Services Commission shall establish a pilot program to provide recipients of medical assistance with oral and written language interpreter services in accordance with federal law and applicable publications of the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Office for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

(b) The Health and Human Services Commission shall establish the pilot program through local governmental entities in at least five sites determined by the commission. The sites must include:

(1) the Harris County Hospital District;

(2) the Bexar County Hospital District;

(3) the El Paso County Hospital District;

(4) the Tarrant County Hospital District; and

(5) the Parkland Health and Hospital System.

(c) The Health and Human Services Commission shall ensure that the pilot program is financed using:

1           (1) money provided to the commission for purposes of  
2 the program by participating local governmental entities to  
3 maximize federal matching money under the medical assistance  
4 program; and

5           (2) any corresponding federal matching money.

6           (d) A participating local governmental entity may provide  
7 money to the Health and Human Services Commission by certification  
8 or intergovernmental transfer to finance the pilot program as  
9 described by Subsection (c)(1).

10          (e) Not later than January 1, 2005, the Health and Human  
11 Services Commission shall evaluate the pilot program and report to  
12 the 79th Legislature on the effectiveness of the program and the  
13 feasibility of expanding the program statewide.

14          (f) This section expires September 1, 2005.

15          SECTION 2. If before implementing any provision of this Act  
16 a state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a  
17 federal agency is necessary for implementation of that provision,  
18 the agency affected by the provision shall request the waiver or  
19 authorization and may delay implementing that provision until the  
20 waiver or authorization is granted.

21          SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
22 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
23 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
24 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
25 Act takes effect September 1, 2003.